

VOTER ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE NEXT ROUND OF ELECTIONS IN IRAQ

-PARTICIPATION; PREFERENCES; PRIORITIES-



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Introduction

This public opinion poll was designed to include as many social classes in Iraq and consisted of sixteen core questions addressed to 2,310 respondents (or sample units), drawn from a sample of 38,000 mobile phone numbers. The mobile phone numbers were randomly selected from the National Database covering all 18 Governorates, and representative of the total population of Iraq, who number in excess of 36 million people. The sample units correlated well at the national level in terms of the percentage population of the respective governorate as against the corresponding sample percentage. The questions included gender variations, age distribution, standard of living, educational attainment, type of work, ethnicity, as well as nine pivotal questions which addressed the objectives and topics of the poll. Projections for the Iraqi population were adopted for each governorate based on the latest data published by the Central Statistical Organisation of the Ministry of Planning.

The current poll delves into the real attitudes of Iraqi society, in all its sections, ethnicities and governorates in order to reveal attitudes towards the following matters:

- 1. Updating of voter data.**
- 2. Participation in elections and whether or not intends to vote.**
- 3. Voter preferences for candidates:**

a) Parties, blocs or independents?

b) Do voters prefer parties, blocs, or independents with:

- **Religious / sectarian agendas.**
- **ethnic agendas.**
- **Tribal / clan agendas.**
- **Civil / secular agendas.**
- **National / local agendas.**

4. What priorities do the respondents want to see in the election manifestos? What are the main characteristics they look for in the candidates? Which electoral reforms do they want to see happen? And other searching questions, covering all the Governorates of Iraq, in order to shed light on voter attitudes towards the upcoming elections (governorate councils and parliamentary.)

Data from the current poll was analysed to reveal the attitudes, views, opinions and personal experiences of the Iraqi citizen regarding the whole electoral process. We utilised the analytical descriptive approach to present the study through a social survey of a sample of individuals of different ages starting from 18 years and included those aged 66 years and over, representing a cross-section of Iraqi society, different geographical areas and its diverse cultures, in a manner that enabled us to make calculated generalisations for the whole country.

The idea of conducting a poll by the Centre; the design and encoding of the questionnaire and the training of pollsters on its use; the review and scrutiny of data, production of tables and the design of graphs and relevant annotations;

through to the final findings and recommendations was all the work of Dr. Ahmed Kassem Muften, Sociologist and Lecturer at the University of Baghdad - Faculty of Arts - Department of Sociology; ably assisted by Dr. Khaled Hantoush Sajet, Sociologist, with the filtering, classification and tabulation of the preliminary data .

This poll is intended to provide us with an opportunity to determine, with factual objectivity, what is on the mind of the electorate about the following: the upcoming elections, development planning, political manifestos and decision-making at all levels; so as to enable us produce an objective and detailed assessment of the whole electoral process. The quota sample method was employed which divides the respondent population or its corresponding sample into classes and leaves the standardised questionnaire the freedom to choose sample elements provided that the numerical and qualitative limits of the sample are met.

Therefore, the sample may be considered truly random; distinguished by its accurate representation of the population with the ability to produce realistic and truthful answers about of Iraqi society.

Methodology

- Telephone calls using randomly selected numbers from the National Database.
- Calls were placed for the period from 29 July to 17 August 2017.
- Number of respondents: 2,310.
- Margin of error ± 3.1 percentage points.

Table (1) shows the distribution of the sample units by Governorate

Governorate	No.	%
Baghdad	613	26.5
Nineveh	194	8.4
Basrah	162	7.0
Sulaymaniya	118	5.1
Thi Qar	116	5.0
Babel	112	4.8
Diyala	101	4.4
Alanbar	99	4.3
Erbil	99	4.3
Kirkuk	95	4.1
Salah al-Din	89	3.9
Dhouk	86	3.7
Najaf	84	3.6
Wasit	84	3.6
Karbala	79	3.4
Diwaniya	72	3.1
Maysan	63	2.7
Almuthanna	44	1.9
total	2,310	100.0

The results of the poll showed distinct variations in the responses of the respondents from the eighteen Governorates to the question: Which Governorate do you live in? The majority of responses closely reflected the total size of the population for the respective Governorate. The results were distributed as follows:

The total number of responses to the question about the Governorate was 2,310 representing 100% of the sample. **Baghdad** topped the poll with 613 respondents, (26.5% of the total sample); followed by **Nineveh** with 194 respondents (8.4%); **Basrah** came in third place with 162 responses (7%); while **Sulaimaniyah** came in fourth place with 118 responses (5.1%); and then **Dhi Qar** with 116 responses (5%); followed by **Babel** with in sixth place with 112 responses (4.8%); followed by **Diyala** with 101 (4.4%); then came **Alanbar** with 99 responses (4.3%) and which was equalled by **Erbil**; while **Kirkuk** took tenth place with 95 responses (4.1%); followed by **Salah al-Din** with 89 responses (3.9%); followed by **Dhouk** 86 responses (3.7%); followed by **Najaf** and **Wasit** respectively, with an equal number of 84 responses (3.6%). They were followed by **Karbala** in fifteenth place with 79 responses (3.4%); followed by **Diwaniyah** with 72 response (3.1%). **Maysan** came in place with 63 responses (2.7%) and in last place the Governorate of **Almuthanna** with 44 responses (1.9%).

Despite the foregoing, the respondents in all the Governorates of Iraq maintained their responses to the question, Different percentages were obtained for each governorate largely due to the topographical impact on population densities and because of other environmental and human factors. It should be noted that the majority of the population resides on flat lowland alluvial plains.

The climate has an essential role to play in the distribution of the population, not only directly on human systems and urbanisation, but also indirectly through its influence on soil, plant life and agriculture. Temperature and rain are significant factors affecting the distribution of the population, as well as the lack of economic and political stability. The two latter factors also play a significant role in the distribution of the population, and often lead to internal migration and displacement; which in turn lead to the resettlement of people into the provinces and Governorates, as illustrated in Map (1).

Map (1) Illustrates the percentage of respondents in the sample population from each Governorate out of the total population of the Governorate

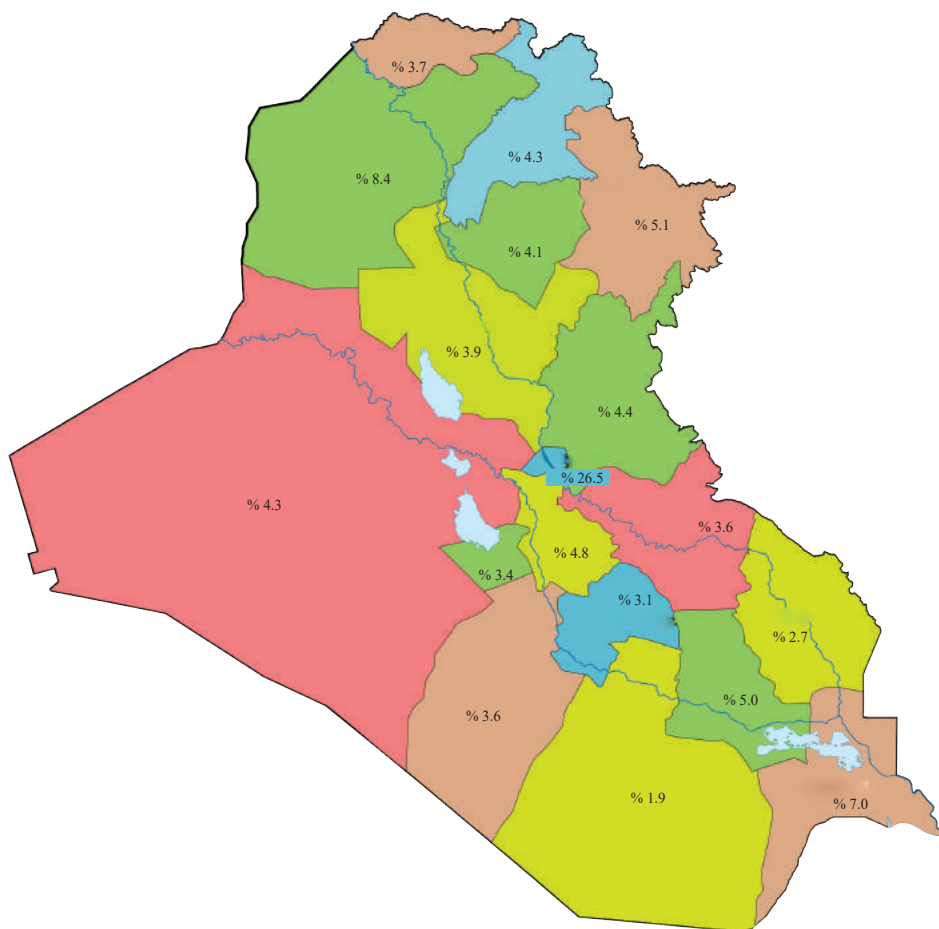


Table (2) shows the age groups of the respondents

Age Groups	No.	%
18-24	336	14.5
25-31	581	25.2
32-38	576	24.9
39-45	379	16.4
46-51	177	7.7
52-58	143	6.2
59-65	89	3.9
and over 66	29	1.3
Total	2,310	100.0

For this poll, the ages of the respondents were divided into **eight** age groups; starting with the age group **18-24 years** and ending with **66 years and over** age group. The “**group range**” was set at six years, while the “**group interval**” at seven years, as shown in the above table.

The results of the poll indicate, as far as the relationship between age groups and total number of sample units is concerned, that the highest proportion of respondents are to be found in the 25-31 age group, with 581 respondents (25.2% of the total); whereas the age group 32-38 years ranked second, with 576 respondents (24.9%); followed by the 39-45 age group in third place with 379 respondents (16.4%); then came the 18-24 group in fourth place with 336 respondents (14.5%). The age group 46-51 ranked fifth with 177 respondents

(7.7%); the 52-58 age group ranked sixth with 143 respondents (6.2%); followed by the 59-65 age group in seventh with 89 respondents (3.9%), and finally, ranked bottom is the 66-and over age group with 29 respondents (1.3%).

It may be noted that the cumulative frequency of respondents aged between 18 and 45 years is 1,872, with a cumulative percentage approaching 81% of the total sample units, which is to say, that the majority of respondents may be categorised as “Youth” and as having not yet reached “old age.” It may also be posited that this cumulative group represents the preferred age-class for the labour market; for marriage; and for their desire to embark on life’s varied activities and challenges. Perhaps more importantly, the role they will play in bringing about social change and in influencing society, whether it be through political participation or by voicing their criticism, opposition and shaping public opinion.

It may also be noted that the cumulative frequency of respondents aged between 46 and 66 and above, was 438 with a cumulative percentage approaching 19% of the total number of sample units, i.e. the respondents who belong to the middle-age and old age ranges, were clearly represented in the sample by nearly one-fifth of the sample population.

We also note from all the above comparisons, that the distribution of the sample came very close to the normal distribution. The percentages and numbers of the target age groups in the poll were closely balanced. The youth category took top spot with greatest number of sample units, as illustrated in Figure (1).

Figure (1) illustrates the distribution of respondents' age groups

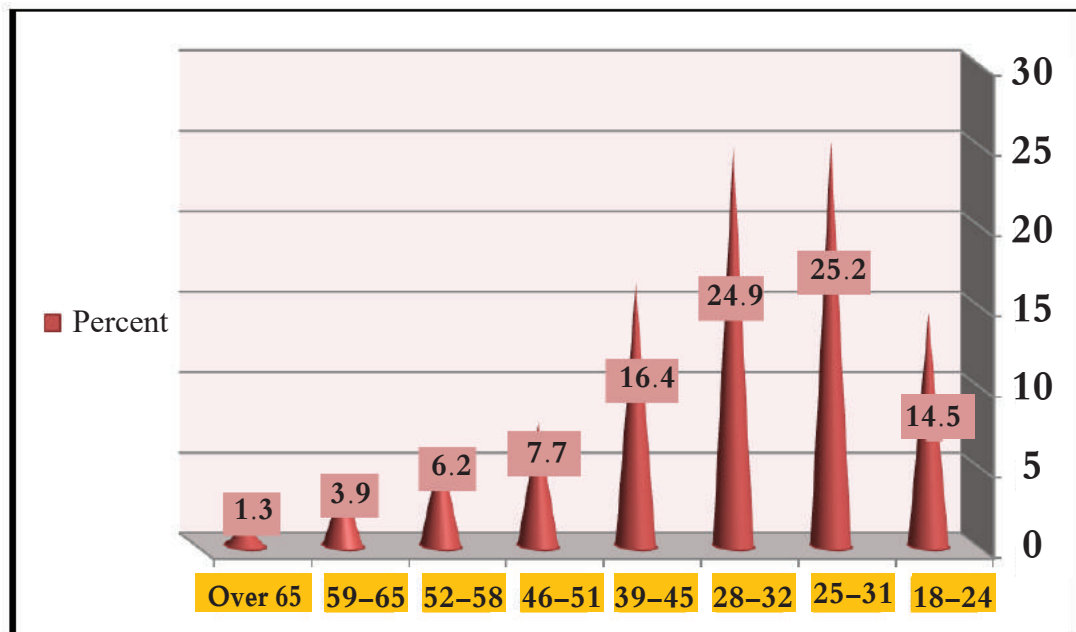


Table (3) shows the distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	No.	%
female	834	36.1
male	1,476	63.9
total	2,310	100.0

Table (3) shows the gender distribution of the poll sample units. The number of males was 1,476 (representing 63.9% of the total sample units), while the number of females was 834 (36.1%).

The percentages of males and females were very similar in seven governorates in the proportion of almost **two-thirds to one-third**, respectively, ranging between 30-40% for females and 60-70% for males, with only slight variations, in the following Governorates: **Nineveh** (69% male, 31% female); **Kirkuk** (61% male, 39% female); **Diyala** (69% male, 31% female); **Karbala** (70% male, 30% female); **Diwaniyah** (70% male, 30% female); **Dhi Qar** (68% males, 32% female), and **Sulaimaniyah** (69% male, 31% female).

Whereas **four Governorates** shared near **equal** percentages, namely: **Baghdad** (58% male, 42% female); **Wasit** (52% male, 48% female); **Najaf** (58% male, 42% female), and **Erbil** (51% male, 49% female).

The percentages for the following **three Governorates** showed different results of about **three quarters to one quarter** : **Almuthanna** (75% male, 25% female); **Maysan** (78% male, 22% female), and **Basrah** (72% males, 28% female).

The following **two Governorates diverged** from the percentages seen earlier for males and females: **Alanabar** (82% male, 18% female); and **Salah al-Din** (88% male, 12% female); whilst **Dhouk** (44% male, 52% female) and **Babel** (49% male, 51% female) went in the opposite direction with the female proportion higher than the male.

When comparing the proportion of males to females for the all the sample units it becomes clear that males represent a much higher proportion than females by a large margin, approaching two thirds to one third, even though the sample population was selected from random numbers pulled from the database of mobile phone subscribers from all the Governorates of Iraq. Calls and

interviews were conducted on this basis, resulting in the female representation we have witnessed.

There is little doubt that social barriers and the reluctance of some women to have contact with and be interviewed by a “stranger or foreigner”, were highly significant contributory factors in the bias we see towards a higher number of male respondents; as well as the fact that the sample was randomised and not weighted. With such obstacles standing in the way of achieving balanced interviews between males and females, it was astonishing and indeed very satisfactory that 834 females responded to express their opinions and attitudes for this poll, as shown in Figure (2).

Figure (2) illustrates the distribution of respondents by gender

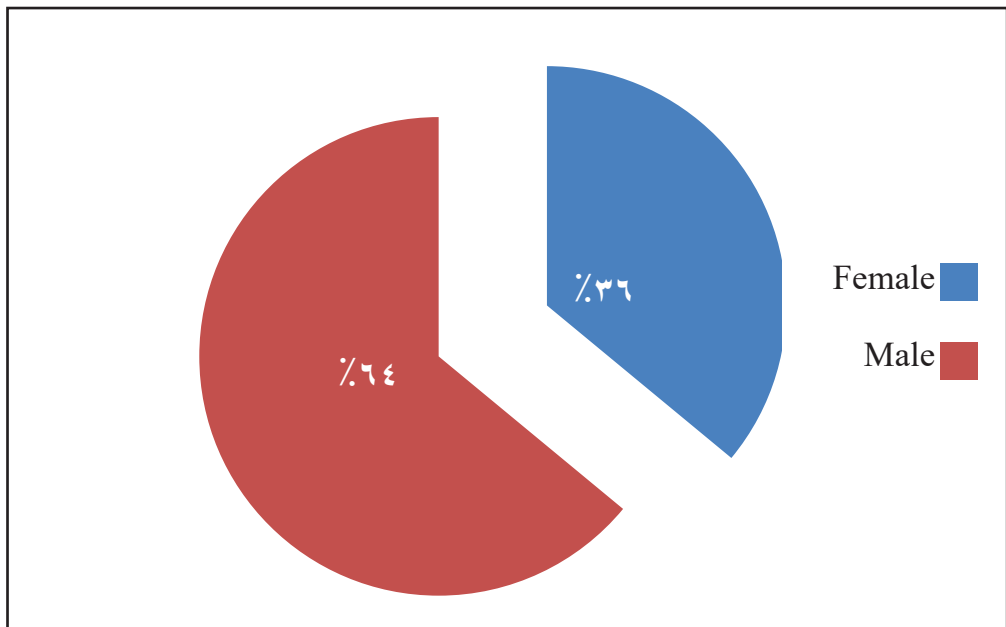


Table (4) shows the marital status of the respondents

Marital Status	No.	%
married	1,793	77.6
single	479	20.7
Widow/er	29	1.3
divorced	9	0.4
total	2,310	100.0

Table (4) shows that the number of married respondents amounted to 1,793 representing 77.6 % of the total sample units. The number of unmarried persons amounted to 479 of respondents or 20.7% of the total. At the same time, the number of widowed respondents amounted to 29 (1.3% of the total), while the number of divorced respondents accounted for 9 (0.4%) of the total sample units.

The cumulative percentage of married, widowed, divorced and for all the sample units was 79%, of all respondents, as against almost 21% for unmarried persons, representing a ratio of approximately 4 to 1.

Marriage and family ties engender in people a greater sense of care and responsibility, a need to plan for the future and an interest in public affairs. This is largely due to the fact that a family comprising several members is more likely to have a combination of varied interests, a wider network of relatives and social contacts; as well as diverse characteristics, hopes and ambitions. Thus, being married or having experienced marriage will fuel greater curiosity and a multiplicity of opinions and decisions which, more often than not, be

garnered for the benefit of society at large and less for individual gain.

Based on the foregoing, it is clear that marital status, in its four manifestations (married, single, widowed, divorced), came closest to a balanced distribution out of the total sample population, when compared to the real population. Marital status also had the best proximity in percentages between the sample units for the majority of the Governorates.

Figure (3) illustrates the percentage distribution of marital status.

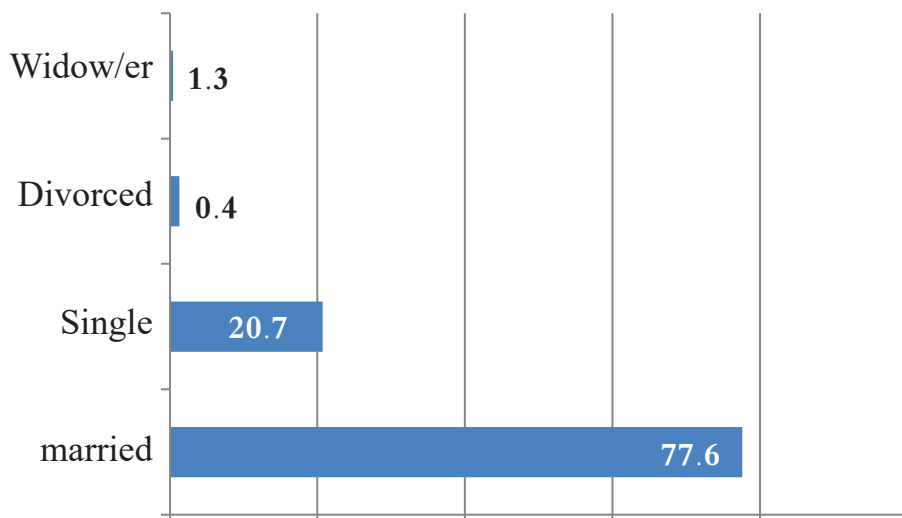


Table (5) shows the educational attainment of the respondents

Educational attainment	No.	%
illiterate	69	3.0
semi-literate	144	6.2
primary school	411	17.8
middle school	444	19.2
secondary school	423	18.3
Institute of further education diploma	232	10.0
bachelor's degree	444	19.2
higher diploma	52	2.3
master's degree	67	2.9
doctorate	24	1.0
total	2,310	100.0

Table (5) shows that illiterate respondents numbered 69 or 3% of the total sample units; while those who read or write (semi-literate) or received primary education numbered 555 respondents (24% of the total). At the same time, those who received middle and secondary certificates numbered 867 in total or almost 38% of the total sample units.

The results of the poll also showed that the number of respondents who obtained an institute of further education diploma or bachelor's degree totalled 676 (29%); while those who gained a postgraduate degrees (higher diploma, masters or doctorate) numbered 143 or 6% of the total sample units.

The above table indicates that the cumulative percentage of primary school and lower certificate holders was about 9% of the total sample units, while the cumulative percentage of the holders of an intermediate certificate

and lower was around 46% of the total number of respondents. Set against this figure, is the cumulative percentage of 54% for the respondents who obtained a secondary education certificate and above, indicating that most of the sample units have attained an educational level ranging from good to very good.

The distribution of the sample units in respect of the educational attainment of the various categories of respondent referred to above cover a range of percentages, starting from a point and gradually increasing to reach the peak percentage value represented by the institute / bachelor category; and then changes direction at the higher diploma / master's / doctorate and carries on downwards. The results form a bell-shaped curve, indicative of a normal distribution of the sample population; thus corresponding very closely to the actual population under study. See Figure (4).

Figure (4) illustrates the distribution of respondents' educational attainment

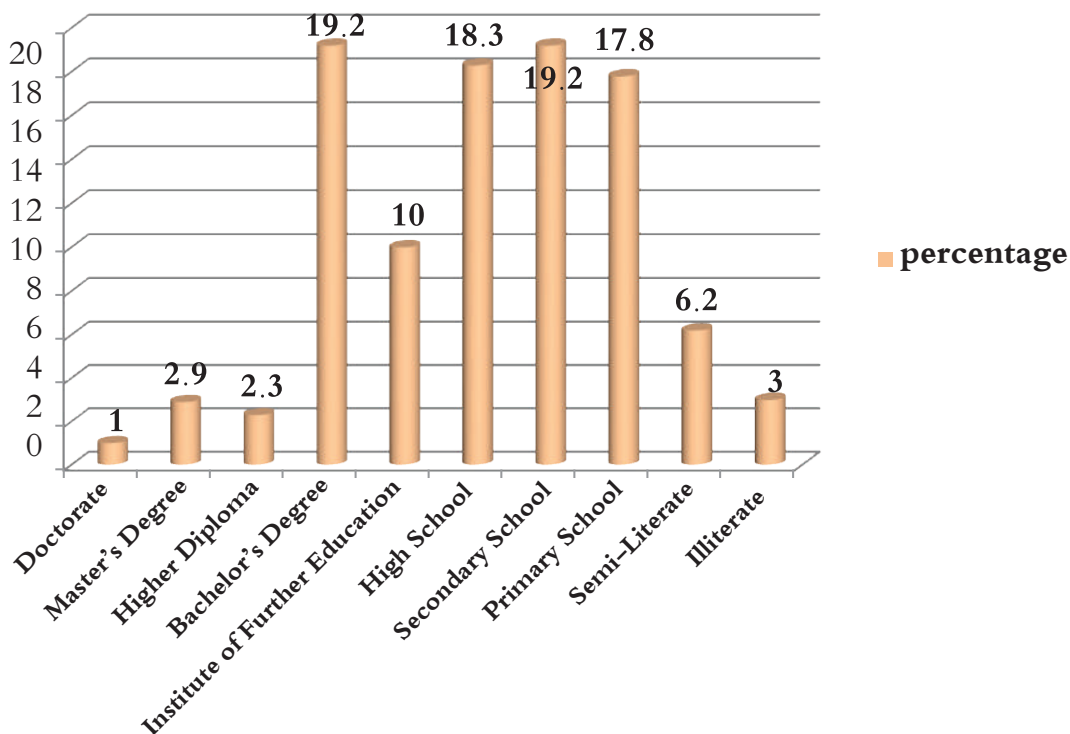


Table (6) shows respondents' standard of living

Standard of Living	No.	%
Our monthly income is often insufficient to meet our basic needs such as food and rent	830	35.9
We have enough to manage family finances but far from perfect	1,153	49.9
We have enough money to live comfortably	327	14.2
total	2,310	100.0

To ascertain the standard of living of the sample units under study, but avoid mentioning real income figures, which would have in any event elicited unrealistic responses for fear of envy, tax evasion issues or risk of theft; three categories were proposed so that respondents could describe their living standards. The first category represents a low standard of living; the second category an average living standard, and the third category represents a high standard of living.

The results in Table (6) show that the number of respondents who described their monthly income as often insufficient to meet their basic needs was 830 or 36% of the total sample units. As for those who described themselves as having enough to manage family finances but far from perfect, they numbered 1,153 respondents (50% of the total); whereas 327 respondents (14% of the total) said that their income and property allowed them to live in prosperity.

The results also reveal that the majority of respondents enjoy a “well to do” standard of living with a cumulative percentage of 64% of the total sample units. The standard of living is, more often than not, associated with other variables such as educational attainment, type of occupation, number of household members, income level and other variables. Conducting a study into educational attainment and the extent of its relationship to the standard of living of the sample units in the poll, shows us clearly that approximately 54% of all sample units have attained an educational level ranging from good to very good.

We can glean from the foregoing that a relationship exists between educational attainment and living standards on the one hand; which themselves co-exist with greater opportunities for participation in the public sphere, on the

other. There is little doubt that educational attainment and long term, stable satisfactory employment contribute, in one way or another, to the ability to partake in aesthetic activities such café society and to participate in cultural forums and civil society. The same factors stimulate a greater desire for political participation, as well as access to universities and academic institutions, and in making and influencing public opinion and much else. Figure (5) shows the percentage distribution of the living standards of the respondents.

Figure (5) shows the percentage distribution of living standards of the respondents

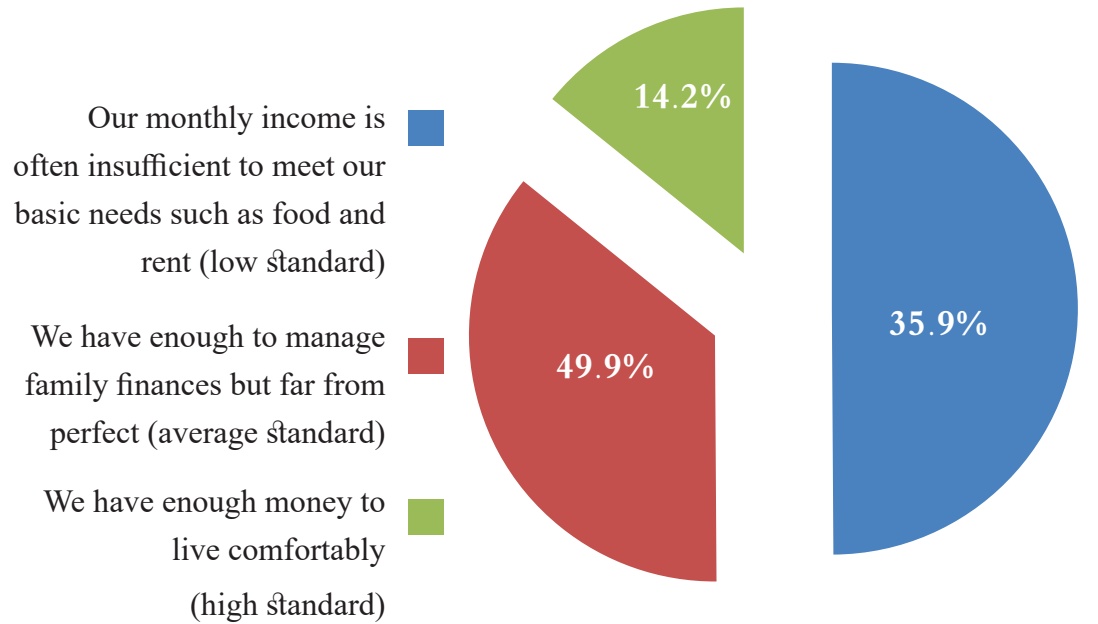


Table (7) shows the respondents' ethnic distribution

ethnicity	No.	%
Arab	1,849	80.0
Kurd	297	12.9
Turcoman	106	4.6
Sabian	29	1.3
Other (Yazidi)	26	1.1
Chaldean/Assyrian	3	0.1
total	2,310	100.0

The figures in Table 7 show that 1,849 respondents or 80% of all respondents identified their ethnicity as Arab, while the number of Kurds in the sample population was 297 or 13% of the total sample units. The Turcoman numbered 106 respondents (nearly 5% of the total); whereas the Sabians came in at slightly over 1% of the total with 29 respondents. The number of Yazidi respondents was 26 which is close to 1% and in last place came those who described their ethnicity as Chaldean/Assyrian with 3 respondents or 0.1% of the total sample units.

Despite the prevalence of the Yazidis as a religion and their ethnic affiliation to the Kurds, the insistence by 26 respondents being described as ethnically Yazidi, and in order to safeguard the integrity of this poll, they have been identified as such. Moreover, sociological theories and studies into identity confirm that identity definition is a conscious personal choice, and on the other hand, identity takes the form of what the respondents impart when they describe their characteristics and the differences between them and others and reassert them. Hence, the number and percentage of Yezidis was cited as an ethnic identity for those respondents who insisted on defining their ethnicity in

this fashion.

Seen from another viewpoint- and returning to the results of the above table- we note that the cumulative percentage of the three minority ethnicities (Sabian, Yazidi and Chaldean/Assyrian) amounted to a total of 2.5% of the total sample units; whereas the majority ethnic groups in Iraq (Arab, Kurdish, Turcoman) represented a total of 97.5% of the population.

The results of the poll also revealed an unintended uniformity in the distribution of the sample at the ethnic level; all the ethnic groups were represented in the survey sample, thus providing a satisfactory opportunity for the different groups to express their views and attitudes towards the upcoming elections. Accordingly, we would encourage reliance on the sample data and the results of the poll for being closely representative of the society under study. Figure (6) illustrates the percentage distribution of respondents by ethnicity.

Figure (6) illustrates the percentage distribution of respondents by ethnicity

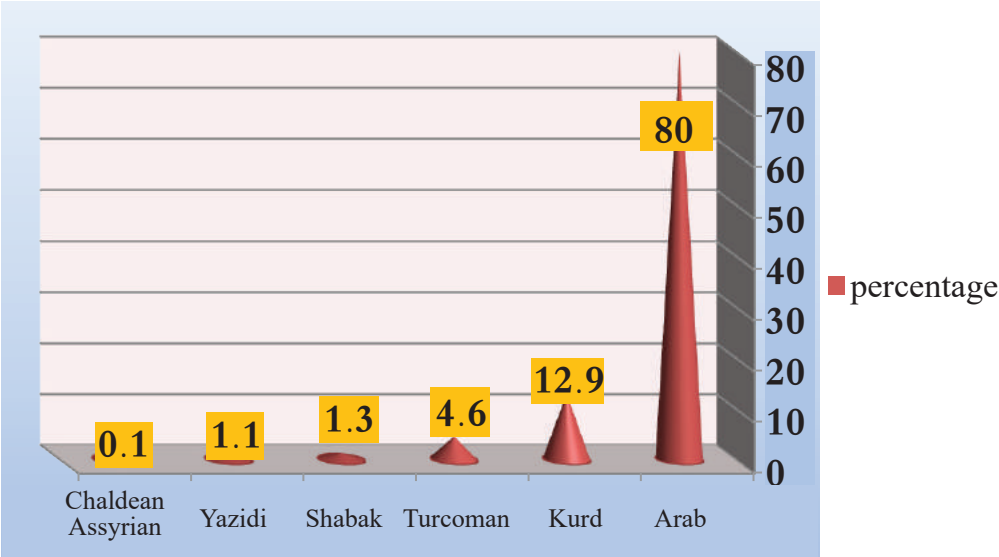


Table (8) shows the distribution of respondents' responses regarding the extent of their belief in the importance of the upcoming elections in developing and improving the country

How important are the next elections in improving and developing the country	No.	%
42.0	970	Yes
28.8	666	Maybe
29.2	674	No
total	2,310	100.0

Figures in table (8) show that 970 respondents, equating to 42% of the total sample, believe in the importance of the upcoming elections as a means of improving the situation in the country. At the same time 666 respondents (29%) expressed uncertainty about the benefits of the forthcoming elections; while 674 respondents (29%) were pessimistic and stated that the upcoming elections will have no positive impact on the country's development.

On the other hand, and in the same vein, young people were more optimistic in their response regarding the importance of the upcoming elections, and role they will play, than their middle aged and older compatriots. 790 youths in the cumulative age group 18-45 (equating to roughly 34% of the total sample) votes "Yes", representing 81% of the 970 respondents who together polled "Yes."

Out of the total 666 respondents who polled "Maybe yes/Maybe no", some 547 were in the youth category, equating to 24% of the total sample and 82% of those who voted "Maybe."

The pessimistic youths numbered 535 out of the 674 total respondents who

were pessimistic; amounting to 23% of the total sample and 97% of those who polled “No” to the importance of the upcoming elections in the development and improvement of the country.

When analysing the above figures and percentages, it becomes evident that the opinions and attitudes of the youth towards the upcoming elections in terms of engendering confidence, creating hope, and facilitating their participation in the voting process should form one of the top priorities of the executive, in particular; and all the other political factions and elites in general. The persisting uncertainty and pessimistic mood of the public cannot be in the interests of the democratic process or its maturity and development; nor is it in the interests of the country’s growth and prosperity. Figure (7) shows the percentage distribution of the respondents’ responses to the current question.

Figure (7) illustrates the percentage distribution of respondents’ responses regarding the extent of their belief in the importance of the upcoming elections in developing and improving the country

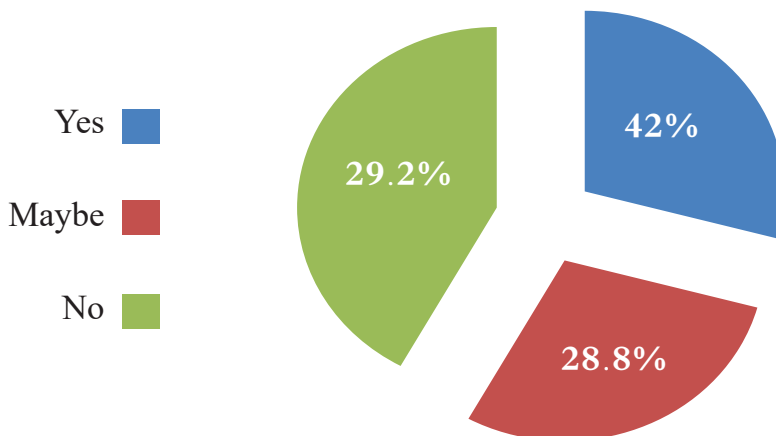


Table (9) shows respondents' responses regarding the updating of their details in the voters' register

Have you updated your details in the voters' register	No.	%
Yes	1,246	53.9
No	1,064	46.1
total	2,310	100.0

The voter register contains the records of all citizens eligible to vote in the upcoming elections in Iraq (governorate councils, parliament), which are based on the most recent updates to the voter register conducted by the Commission through its voter register update centres located throughout the Governorates of Iraq. The update campaign publicised the locations of special centres in each Governorate, where voters were able to check and verify their personal data in the voter register and if necessary, to update it. The process resulted in a comprehensively updated, final voter register, containing the records of all eligible voters, following the deletion of the records of all military personnel, who are registered elsewhere.

It is with such measures that the integrity of the whole election and voter registration process is safeguarded, and with it, comes transparency and greater participation. Any shortcomings in the oversight process will eventually result in the loss of confidence, lower turnout and the loss of the legitimacy of those who ostensibly win the elections.

Based on the foregoing, the importance of the data presented in Table 9 becomes evident. Figures confirm that 1,246 respondents (54% of the total

sample units) updated their details in the voter register, as against 1,064 respondents (46% of the sample units) who failed to do so.

All 2,310 or 100% of respondents answered the following question: Have you updated your data on the voter register? **Kirkuk** Governorate topped the respondents' responses with 72% of the total respondents in the Governorate; followed by **Salah al-Din** with nearly 69%; and in third place came **Diyala** with 67%; whilst **Karbala** ranked fourth in terms of the number of respondents who updated their data on the voter register with 66%. Then came **Dhi Qar** Governorate, in fifth place with 64%; followed, in sixth place, by **Diwaniyah** with an equal 64%; followed by **Maysan** with 62%; then came **Babel** with 61%; and **Najaf** with 60% (55%). In tenth place came **Erbil** with 55%; followed by **Basrah** Governorate with 54%; followed by **Almuthana** with 52%; and then **Wasit** with 50%. The Governorates of **Baghdad** and **Dhouk** polled the same percentage of 48%; and in sixteenth place came **Nineveh** with 42%; followed by **Alanbar** with 41%. Finally, trailing at the bottom, in eighteenth place, was **Sulaimaniyah** with 38%. Figure (8) illustrates the distribution of respondents' responses to the question mentioned above.

Figure (8) illustrates the percentage distribution of respondents' responses regarding the updating of their details in the voters' register

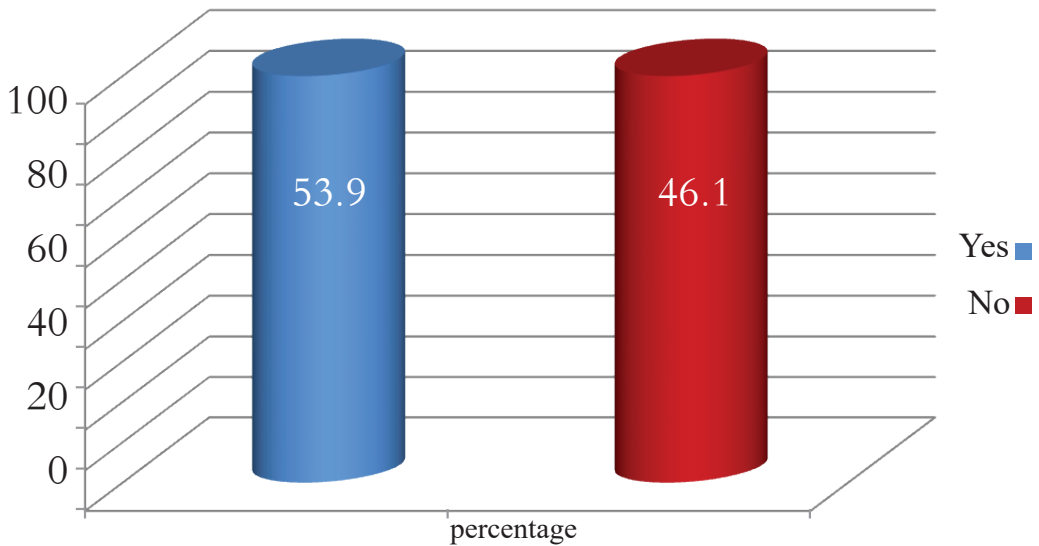


Table (10) shows the intentions of the respondents to participate in the upcoming elections

Do you intend to take part in the upcoming elections?	No.	%
Yes	1,368	59.2
Undecided	581	25.2
No	361	15.6
total	2,310	100.0

Most citizens are not active in politics. They keep up with political events in a passive way through reading newspapers, chat with friends and family about

what is going on; and watch the news on television. Elections make citizens effective partners in political life, although it is nothing more than an expression of civic engagement at the lowest level. In reality, only a small proportion of citizens take part in the election process, for instance, party campaign activists; organisers of meetings and door to door interviewers; party members, and organisers of meetings with political figures. However, the mere fact that people are invited to speak and vote on Election Day increases politicians' sensitivity to public opinion, and their engagement with the public becomes stronger and more earnest.

The “democratic citizen” is a citizen who is interested, involved and participates in public life. Accordingly, he is expected to participate in the elections and to cast his vote out of a sense of responsibility and concern. The higher the percentage of citizens participating in elections, the more effective and valid the election results. When voter turnout is very low, there is a risk that that elected politicians only represent a minority of the population. Hence, political apathy poses a real danger to democracy.

To discover the intentions of the respondents and what they thought about taking part in the upcoming elections, they were asked the aforementioned question. Table (10) shows that 1,368 respondents (59% of the sample units) have decided to participate in the next elections. At the same time, 581 respondents (25%) were undecided when they responded with “maybe yes and maybe not.” Finally, 361 respondents (16%) were decisively against taking any part in the elections.

All 2,310 respondents, that is 100% of those canvassed, answered the question about their intention to participate in the next elections. Respondents

in **Almuthanna** topped the list with a 77% positive response regarding participation; followed by **Maysan** with 75% of the total respondents in the Governorate responding positively to the question; and in third place was **Babel** with 73%. **Salah al-Din** ranked fourth in terms of the number of respondents who intend to participate in the next elections with 69%; then **Diwaniyah** 68%; followed in sixth place by **Karbala** Governorate 66%; then **Diyala** with 63%; then **Nineveh**, **Dhi Qar** and **Wasit** ranked equally with 62%. Meanwhile, **Basrah** ranked 11th with 60% of respondents indicating their intention to vote; followed by equally placed **Erbil**, **Najaf**, **Baghdad** and Dahouk with 57%; followed by **Alanbar** with 52%; then followed by 17th place **Kirkuk** with 51%; and last of all and taking bottom place was **Sulaimaniyah** with only 32% of respondents intending to vote at the next elections.

Figure (9) illustrates the intentions of the respondents to participate in the upcoming elections

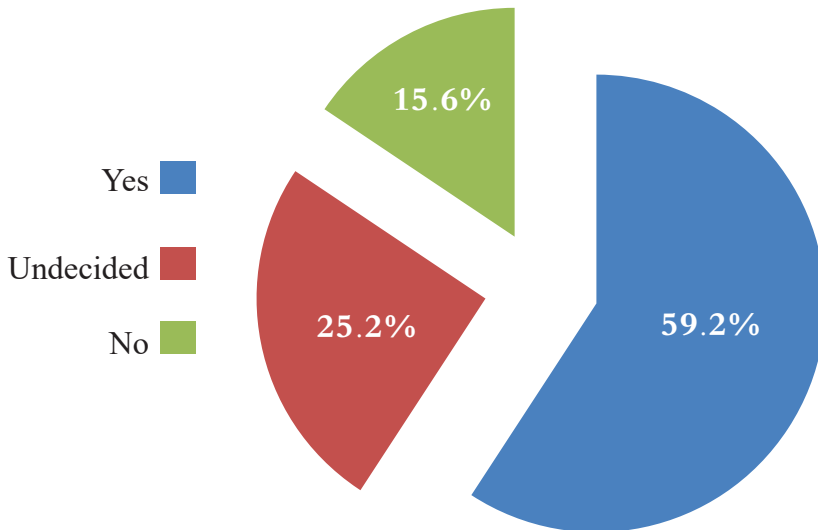


Table (11) shows the voting attitudes of the respondents towards the upcoming elections

If you decide to participate in the next elections, who will you vote for to safeguard your future and the country's future?	No.	%
Bloc, coalition, party or individual with civil/secular agenda	561	24.3
Independent technocrats	551	23.9
Bloc, coalition, party or individual backed by religious authority	343	14.8
Bloc, coalition, party or individual representing all Iraqi factions	285	12.3
Bloc, coalition, party or individual with religious/sectarian agenda	107	4.6
Bloc, coalition, party or individual with tribal/clan loyalties	65	2.8
Bloc, coalition, party or individual with ethnic/nationalist loyalties	54	2.3
Others	344	15.0
Total	2,310	100.0

The data in table (11) reveal an inconspicuous and unexpected set of attitudes by the respondents towards parties and figures they intend to vote for in the upcoming elections. The results indicate that 561 respondents - slightly more than 24% of the total sample units - have chosen to vote for civil/secular parties and individuals; whilst in second place, came the choice to vote for

independent technocrats, with only slightly less than the number of respondents in the former category, with 551 respondents, representing 24% of the total sample units.

This was followed by the choice of voting for any party or figure supported and vouched for by the Religious Authority, numbering 343 respondents, close to 15% of the total sample units. In fourth place, came the choice to vote for a bloc, coalition, party or individual representing all Iraqi factions with 285 respondents or 21% of all the sample units.

In fifth place, came the choice to vote for religious or sectarian parties and figures with 107 respondents, close to 5% of the total sample units; followed by, in sixth place, those choosing to vote for tribal or clan affiliations, with 65 respondents, or 3% of the total. Finally, and in bottom place, came the choice to vote for those with ethnic affiliations, with 54 respondents or 2% of the sample.

Seen from another perspective, but in the same vein, the responses in the “other” category, which totalled 344 or 15% of the total sample units, were divided as follows: 188 (8%) said that they had not yet decided who to vote for; while 103 (4%) stated that they will vote for those who serve the interests of the people and the country; and finally, 53 respondents and (2% of the total sample units) said that they will not vote under any circumstances.

A closer look at the results in the table and the implications reveal the following trends:

1. The attitudes of 1,397 respondents, with a cumulative percentage approaching 65% of the total sample units, sided with parties or figures identified as: civil, or professional/ specialist, or patriotic who serve the people;

2. The attitudes of 569 respondents, with a cumulative percentage of approximately 25% of the total sample units, sided with parties or figures identified as: supported by the Religious Authority, or with religious or sectarian affiliations, or tribal/clan orientation, or ethnic agendas;

3. We can deduce from the results in the above mentioned points 1 and 2 that 25% of respondents will cling to their traditional affiliations when they vote; in contrast to the 65% of respondents who said that the deciding factors in whose favour they will vote include those identified as having civil, professional and specialist credentials, as well those who are patriotic and serve of the people;

4. The percentage of those remained undecided accounted for approximately 8% of the total number of respondents; and

5. 2% of the total of respondents expressed a negative attitude towards the elections and confirmed that they do not intend to participate under any circumstances.

Figure (10) illustrates the percentage distribution of respondents' voting intentions

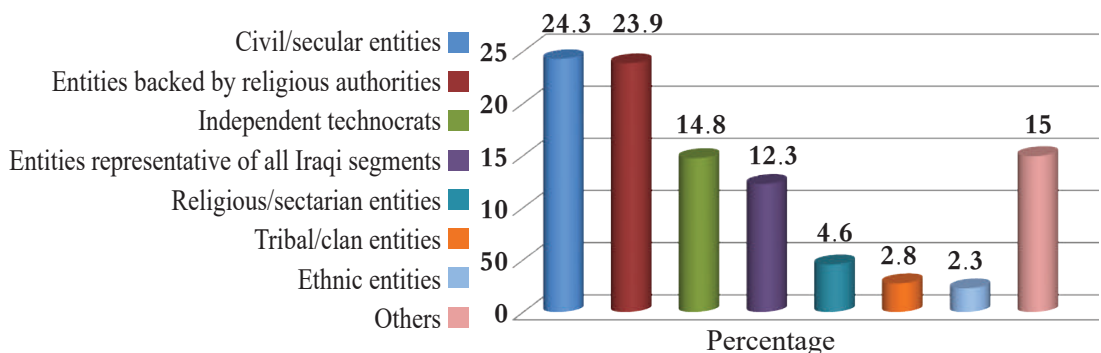


Table (12) shows the attitudes of the respondents regarding the re-election of serving politicians

If you participate in the elections, will you vote for politicians currently in power?	No.	%
11.4	263	Yes
33.5	773	Maybe
55.1	1,274	No
Total	2,310	100.0

Freedom of expression is bound to the political culture; because the latter frames the boundaries of that freedom and protects it from absurdity and individual capriciousness. The rotation of power or alternation of political forces is one of the most important mechanisms of democratic practices in a society. It is an exercise whose purity and transparency all democratic societies are keen to preserve. The media plays an important role in promoting and consolidating a culture of democracy in society and monitors their practices by the democratic system.

Democratic culture provides a kind of belief in the merits of political and intellectual participation and tolerance, and underpins a spirit of initiative, selflessness and political trust. It provides a forum for resolving controversy and confusion in public opinion regarding the re-election of the current incumbents. So, for the purpose of ascertaining what future voters will decide, we posed the following question: will you vote for political figures who are currently in power?

In answer to the above question, the figures in table (12) indicates that

263 respondents or 11% of the total sample said they will vote in the upcoming elections for current incumbents; whilst 773 respondents (approximately 34%) were undecided; and 1,274 respondents or 55% of the total sample said they will not re-elect those currently in power.

All 2,310 or 100% of respondents answered the question of whether they intend to re-elect politicians currently in power. Due to the importance of this controversial and problematic question, the responses will be presented in detail for each respective Governorate, showing the divisions in the respondents' responses (yes, maybe, and no), and sorted in the order of the highest percentage of those who intend to re-elect some of the politicians currently in power and comparing with those who were undecided or refused to re-elect them.

Kirkuk topped the other Governorates with the following responses: Yes 19%, Maybe 24% and No 57%; followed by **Diyala**: Yes 17%, Maybe 35% and No 48%; followed by **Karbala** in third place: Yes 15%, Maybe 50% and No 35%; followed by **Baghdad**: Yes 14%, Maybe 26% and No 60%; then came **Almuthanna**: Yes 14%, Maybe 32% and No 54%.

Erbil came sixth with: Yes 13%, Maybe 21% and No 66%; followed by **Dhouk**: Yes 13%, Maybe 27% and No 60%; then **Nineveh**: Yes 11%, Maybe 34% and No 55%; then **Salah al-Din**: Yes 11%, Maybe 35% and No 54%; followed by **Maysan**: Yes 11%, Maybe 31% and No 58%; followed **Alanbar** with: Yes 10%, Maybe 29% and No 61%; then **Diwaniyah** with: Yes 10%, Maybe 31% and No 59%.

Dhi Qar's respondents were divided as follows: Yes 10%, Maybe 35% and No 55%; followed by **Sulaimaniyah**: Yes 9%, Maybe 22% and No 79%;

followed by **Basrah**: Yes 6%, Maybe 70% and No 24%; followed by **Babel** with: Yes 6%, Maybe 31% and No 63%; followed by **Wasit** with: Yes 6%, Maybe 30% and No 64%; and finally, ranked 18th and last is **Najaf** with: Yes 4%, Maybe 52% and No 44%.

Figure (11) illustrates the percentage distribution of respondents' stance towards the re-election of politicians currently in power

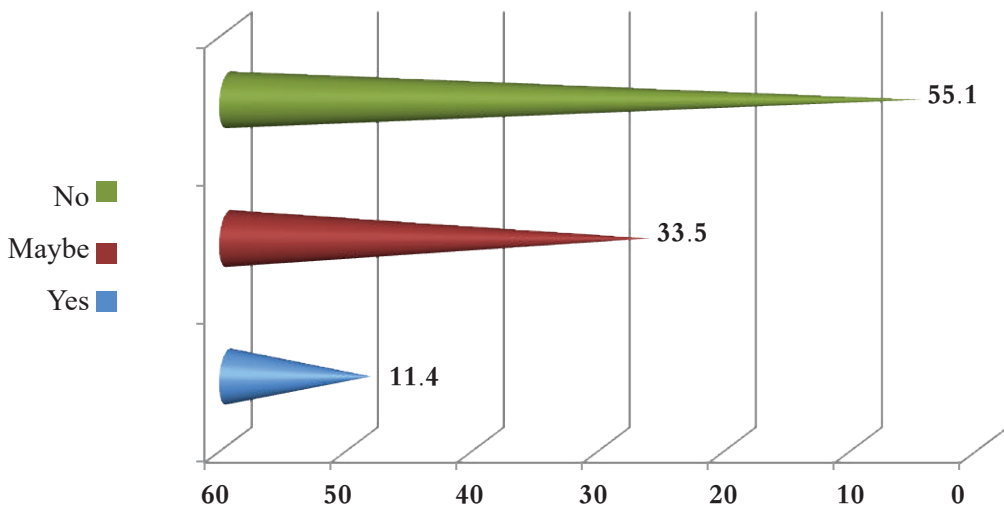


Table (13) shows respondents' preferences for type of nominee

Which nominee will you vote for?	No.	%
Party	184	8.0
Bloc or coalition	309	13.4
Independent candidates	1,584	68.6
Undecided	233	10.0
Total	2,310	100.0

The people are sovereign in democratic societies, and are the source of the powers granted to the Government. In a parliamentary democracy, people place the power to make decisions about public affairs in the hands of their democratically elected representatives. In these elections, the people express their support for parties, blocs or independent candidates, who compete amongst themselves for power and government; thus elections come to reflect the different opinions held by the electorate and the preferences of the citizens.

Democratic elections increase the citizen's active participation in public life and provide him with an opportunity for action and influence. Only in democratic systems is there real competition between parties, blocs or individuals. The competition allows all participants an equal opportunity to freedom of expression, freedom of association and the freedom to organise. The citizen's participation increases when he is presented with differing views from the various parties, blocs and personalities; and when he has greater faith in his ability to influence the outcome of the election results.

On the other hand, if the voter felt that he had no real prospect of influencing public life, and that he had no real choice of alternatives; or that he was unable to influence the composition and views of the candidates, his tendency to participate in the elections greatly diminishes.

The results of table 13 show that 1,584 respondents, close to 69% of the total sample units, preferred to vote for independents. Whereas, 309 respondents, 13% of the total, said that they prefer to vote for a bloc or a coalition; while some 184 respondents (8%) preferred to vote for a party. Finally, 233 respondents (10%) declared that they have not yet decided to vote for any of the above-mentioned nominees.

All 2,310 or 100% of respondents answered the question at hand. The Governorate of **Sulaimaniyah** was top with 83% of its respondents preferring to vote for independents; followed by **Dhouk** with 82%; followed by **Kirkuk** with 79%; followed by **Salah al-Din** and **Diyala** ranked equal fourth in the number of respondents who decided to vote for independents, with 75%. There followed the four Governorates of **Erbil**, **Nineveh**, **Baghdad**, and **Dhi Qar** with the same result of 71%; **Alanbar** followed in seventh place with 67%; then came **Babel** with 66%; whereas **Basrah** came ninth with 65%: followed by **Karbala** governorate 57%; followed by **Maysan** 56%; followed twelfth place **Almuthanna** with 55%; then came **Wasit** with 54%; and equal last came **Najaf** and **Diwaniyah** each respectively with 51%. Figure (12) shows the percentage distribution of the respondents' responses to the question at hand.

Figure (12) illustrates respondents' preferences for type of nominee

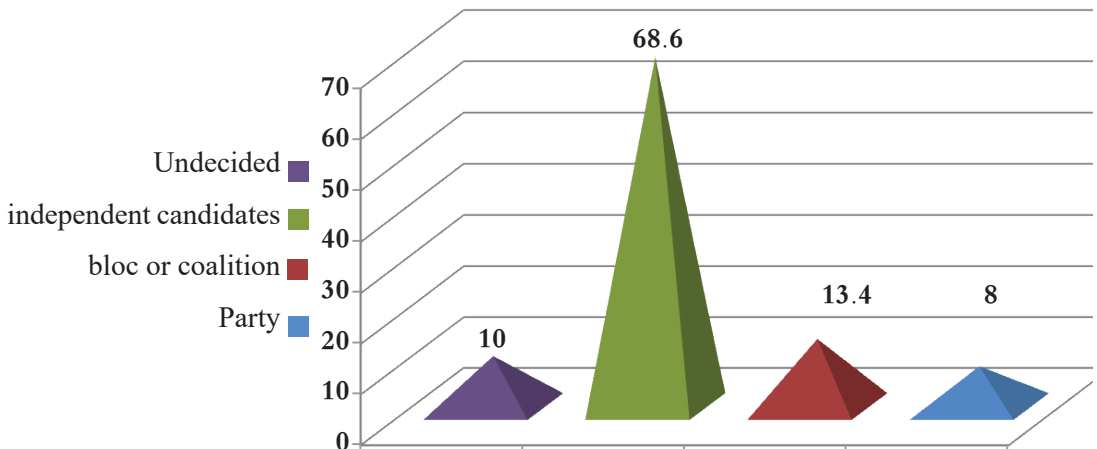


Table (14) shows the personal characteristics most favoured by respondents in the candidates they intend to vote for

Which personal characteristics do you most want to see in a candidate?	No.	%	Order of Importance
Integrity (Honesty)	1,410	30.5	1
Academic achievement and specialism (postgraduate degree)	774	16.7	2
Independence	734	15.9	3
Job expertise (professionalism)	731	15.8	4
Services to the community	500	10.8	5
Religiosity (behaviour and religious/sectarian affiliations)	160	3.5	6
Residence (length of residence in governorate/locality)	62	1.3	7
Age (Young, old)	58	1.2	8
Gender (male, female)	46	1.0	9
Safeguard citizens' and national interests	30	0.6	10
Ethnicity	27	0.6	11
Tribal/clan affiliations	24	0.5	12
Others	66	1.4	-
Total	4,620	100.0	

Character experts describe the personal traits of candidates in simple terms as “a strong impression born in the minds of voters when they think of a specific politician to elect.” This impression is a type of mental picture favoured by the voter. Most of the specialist scientific studies into election issues indicate that the political personality - in most cases - must match the social aspirations of the masses. The system of hopes, expectations and demands, defines the standards by which the politician performs the social duties assigned to him; the realisation of the aspirations entrusted to him; and the extent to which his work is consistent with those standards. It is a type of “social carrot and stick” system that defines relations between voter and the candidate; manifesting itself in two forms: (1)- the right of the masses to expect appropriate behaviour, and (2)- commitment by the politician to act in a manner that meets social aspirations.

These social aspirations are formed on the basis of the “matching of expectations” or the lack of. The mismatch usually impacts on the work of politicians and leaders; and the greater the mismatch, the stronger the desire by the electorate to choose another politician. Thus, if the activities of the politician (in question) are viewed negatively; efforts will be made to choose another politician whose qualities are more attuned with the wishes of the voting public (these qualities are often contradictory to those of the former politician and which were negatively evaluated by the public). As such, the political persona must sit somewhere in between the public’s social aspirations and the personality of the new politician.

It is therefore necessary that the personal attributes of the prospective politician or leader match these social aspirations. However, it must be remembered that the “direction” the character takes in one direction or another,

is linked either to force of character or to the social aspirations which the public endorses and expresses.

In order to reveal the relative importance of the most prominent personal characteristics preferred by the respondents in the candidates for whom they intend to vote, a question was posed about the personal characteristics most preferred by the citizen in the candidate. Respondents were also given the opportunity to identify the two most important traits which they consider to be decisive in making their choice, with the option of choosing the same trait twice if the respondent wished to emphasize the importance of that attribute. The aforementioned methodology was adopted for question at hand and will again be repeated for questions (15) and (16) that follow. In this manner, the total number of responses doubled to 4,620 (instead of 2,310), to account for the fact that the respondents responded to two choices rather than one.

Five traits secured the preferences of the majority of respondents, collectively accounting for 4,149 responses, with a cumulative percentage close 90%. In first place came **integrity and honesty** with 1,410 responses (30.5%); followed by the **higher certificate** trait represented by academic achievement and specialism with 774 responses (close to 17%). In third place came **independent and non-partisan** trait with 734 responses (close to 16%). Followed by the **level of professional competence and work experience** trait with 731 responses (almost 16%). In fifth place came **services provided by the candidate to the local community** with 500 responses (close to 11%).

The remaining responses were split, and were divided between ten traits accounting for 471 responses, with a cumulative percentage of 10% of the total responses. In sixth place came **religiosity** (i.e. behaviour and religious/sectarian

affiliations) with 160 responses (3.5%); followed by the **residence** trait (i.e., the length of time spent in the Governorate / province) with 62 responses (1.3%); followed by the attribute of **age** (young, old age) with 58 responses (1.2%). In ninth place came the **gender** trait (male, female) with 46 responses (1%). In tenth place ranked the **political and party affiliation** with 28 responses (0.6%). Then followed by the **ethnic affiliation** with 24 responses (0.5%). Finally, the **other** traits with 66 responses (1.4%), divided as follows: **safeguard citizens' and national interests** trait with 30 responses (0.6%); followed by **God fearing (brave and just)** with 29 responses (0.6%); then came the **undecided**, including those who decided not to vote for any trait, with 7 responses (0.2%).

Figure (13) illustrates the percentage distribution of the personal traits which respondents most want to see in the candidates they intend to vote for

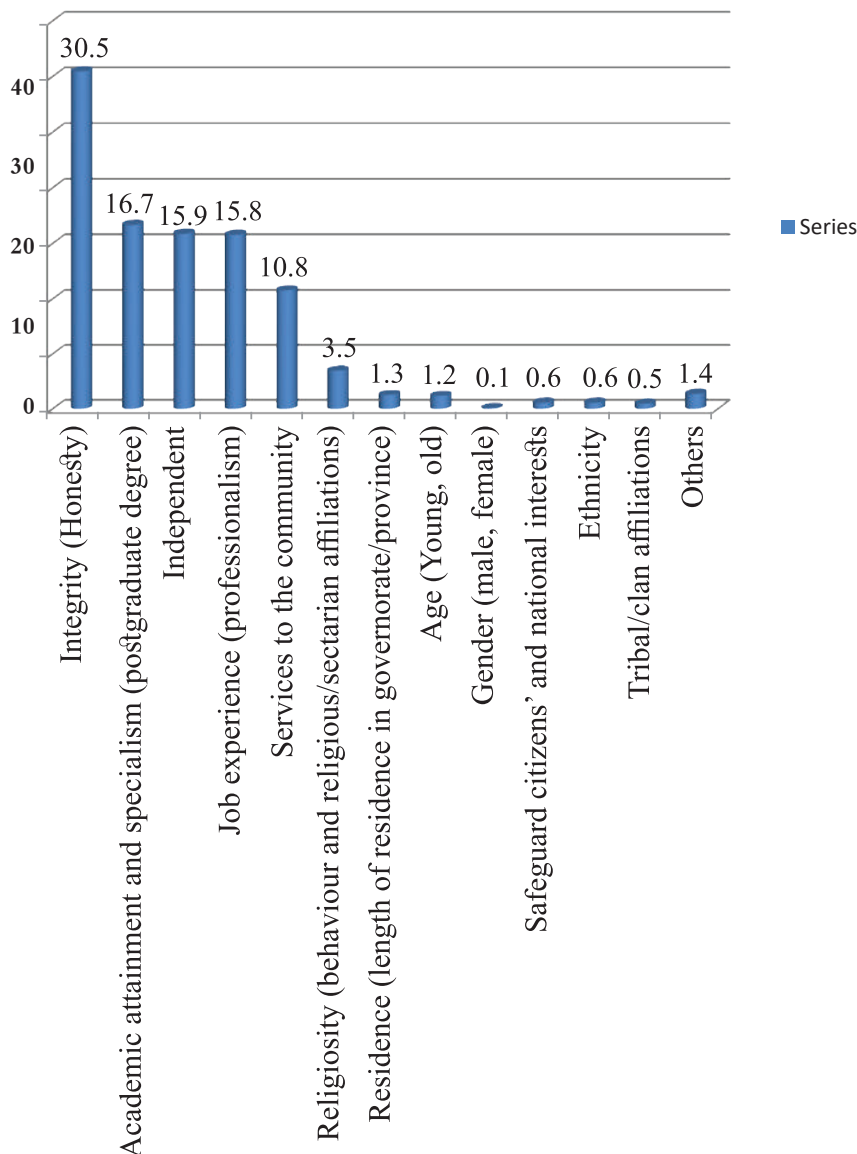


Table (15) shows the most prominent electoral reforms sought by respondents and which they expect candidates to deliver

What are the most prominent electoral reforms you want to see the candidates deliver?	No.	%	Order of importance
Replacing the Independent Electoral Commission with one appointed by the United Nations	1,203	26.0	1
Lists to be open and not closed	967	21.0	2
Retain Iraqi identity of the Independent Electoral Commission but replace its members with independent ones	774	17.0	3
Amend election laws to allow individuals and minor blocs to win seats	638	14.0	4
Replace Governorates with Provinces as the electoral constituency	378	8.0	5
Reduce number of seats on the Governorate Council	373	8.0	6
Others	287	6.0	7
Total	4,620	100.0	-

Electoral reforms are described as a change in electoral systems to improve the way public aspirations are expressed in election results. The right to change the rules is part of the basic definition of democracy. Political systems are not flawless; it therefore follows that the flaws associated with the electoral process need to be diagnosed and electoral reforms implemented, with all haste, to

improve the political process.

Solutions to the problems with democracy tend towards “more democracy.” Electoral reform is a permanent feature of any healthy democratic system. In order to conceive a popular electoral system, it is advisable to start by drawing up a list of criteria that summarise what is to be achieved and what to be avoided. Furthermore, in order to identify the relative importance of the most prominent electoral reforms sought by the respondents and which the candidates are expected to adopt and implement; the present question was put to them. In addition, respondents were also given the opportunity to identify the two most important reforms which they consider to be decisive in casting their vote, with the option of choosing the same reform twice over if the respondent wished to emphasize the importance of a particular reform.

Four reforms secured the majority of the respondents’ preferences with a total of 3,203 responses, and a cumulative percentage of 78% of the total responses. Ranked top was the choice **Replacing the Independent Electoral Commission with one appointed by the United Nations** securing 1,203 responses (26%). It was followed, in second place, by **Lists to be open and not closed**, with 967 responses (21%). In third place was **Retain the Iraqi identity of the Independent Electoral Commission but replace its members with independent ones** with 774 responses (17%). Ranked fourth was the choice to **Amend election laws to allow individuals and minor blocs to win seats** with 638 responses (14%).

Ranked fifth in importance in the list of reform priorities, from the view point of the respondents, is to **Replace Governorates with Provinces as the electoral constituency** with 378 responses (8% of the total responses); followed

in sixth place by **Reduce number of seats on the Governorate Council** with 373 responses (8%). Finally, the “other” came last with 287 responses (6%).

The responses in the “other” category were divided as follows: **I am not familiar with these matters and I have no interest them** got 194 respondents (4%); followed by **I do not believe there are any real reforms**, 29 respondents (0.6%); followed by **replace all the politicians** with 18 respondents (0.4%); followed by

the reduction in the number of seats on the Governorate Council with 16 respondents (0.3%). Then came the choice **there should be electronic and transparent elections** with 15 respondents (0.3%). Finally, in last place came **changing the regime to a presidential system** with 15 respondents (0.3%). Figure (14) shows the percentage distribution of the respondents’ responses to the question at hand.

Figure (14) illustrates the percentage distribution of the most prominent electoral reforms which respondents would most like to see candidates deliver on

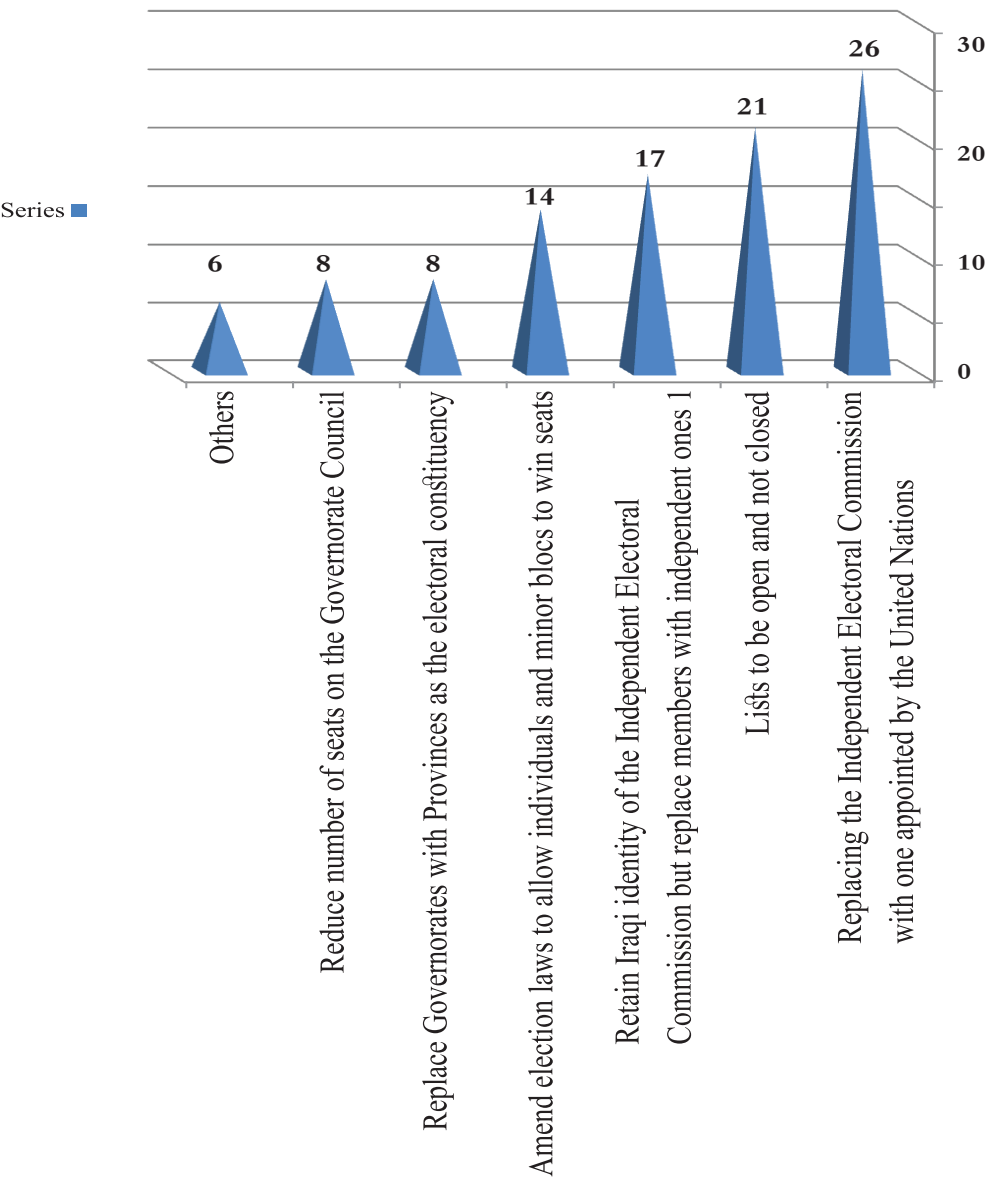


Table (16) shows the election pledges which respondents most like to see candidates deliver on

Which election pledge would you most like to see candidates deliver on	No.	%	Order of importance
Services and economy	976	21.1	1
Security and border protection	961	21.0	2
Job creation	700	15.1	3
Anti-corruption	642	13.9	4
Reconstruction of areas liberated from Daesh	215	4.6	5
Education and health	212	4.5	6
Eliminating sectarianism	184	4.0	7
Freedom and individual rights	131	2.8	8
Community reconciliation	105	2.3	9
Support of the armed forces	102	2.2	10
Rights of minorities, women and children	82	1.8	11
Resolving issues between the Federal and Kurdistan Regional Governments	70	1.5	12
Resolving issues between the Federal Government and Sunni Majority Governorates	63	1.4	13
Foreign relations; maintaining balanced relations with neighbouring countries and the world at large	62	1.3	14

Devolving greater powers to the Governorates	56	1.2	15
Sport and Youth	35	0.8	16
Others (all of the above)	24	0.5	17
Total	4,620	100.0	-

The **election manifesto** represents a set of “proposed” solutions to “existing” problems that stem from the strategic or political view taken by the candidate towards national issues of concern to the electorate. It is an agenda or set of activities that the candidate employs to inform the voter about his or her own views and personality in order to secure their votes. For this reason, manifestos resort to promises or pledges, whose contents form the central message intended to attract the voting public; thus, they must be appropriate to the aspirations and needs of the public, and to the circumstances of the constituency in which the candidate competes.

Therefore, the candidate’s ideas and election pledges must be prioritised according to the nature of the most pressing issues in the constituency. If two issues are of equal urgency, the one which is most relevant to the local people and with the greatest impact on their lives, should be chosen. For example, health and education may be equally urgent, but the provision of health services may be more urgent than the establishment of new schools in the area. The candidate should therefore focus on a set of specific issues; issues which represent the true extent of the crisis at constituency or national level. This will demonstrate the candidate’s earnestness about what may be called “local crisis management.” The candidate’s ability to convince voters of his ability to identify local and national crises and how to manage them, would undoubtedly be a major factor

in his or her victory.

One of the most important stages in the formulation of an election manifesto and the identification of the public's priorities for this purpose, is the conducting of a public opinion poll. The poll's purpose would be to examine the public's perception of the programme set forth in the manifesto and to identify their preferences and priorities. In order to ascertain the order of the main priorities sought by the respondents from the candidates' election manifesto; a question was posed about the most important pledges that the citizen wished to be adopted and implemented by the candidates. The respondents were given the opportunity to identify the two most important pledges or policies which they would like to see at the forefront of the manifesto and which would be decisive in determining who they would vote for. Respondents were given the option of choosing the same manifesto pledge twice over if the respondent wished to emphasize its importance .

Four prominent manifesto pledges secured the majority of the respondents' preferences with 3,279 responses, and a cumulative percentage of almost 71% of the total responses. Ranked top was the **services and economy** manifesto pledge, with 976 responses (21.1%); followed by the **security and border protection** manifesto pledge, with 961 responses (21%); in third place came the **job creation** pledge with 700 responses (15%); followed by the **anti-corruption** pledge with 642 responses (14% of the total responses).

The remaining responses were divided amongst thirteen other manifesto pledges, accounting for 1,341 responses, with a cumulative percentage of 29% of the total responses. Ranked fifth was the **reconstruction of the liberated areas from Dahesh** with 215 responses (4.6%); followed by **education and**

health with 212 (4.5%); followed by **elimination of sectarianism** with 184 response (4%). In eighth place was **freedoms and individual rights** with 131 responses (2.8%); next came **community reconciliation** with 105 (2.3%); followed by **support for the armed forces** with 102 responses (2.2%). Ranked eleventh was **rights of minorities, women and children** with 82 responses (1.8%); followed by **resolving issues between the federal and kurdistan regional governments** with 70 responses (1.5%); followed by **resolving issues between the federal government and sunni majority governorates** with 63 responses (1.4%); next came **foreign relations and maintaining balanced relations with neighbouring countries and the world at large** with 62 responses (1.3%); followed by **devolving greater powers to the governorates** with 56 responses (1.2%). In sixteenth place came **sport and youth** with 35 responses (0.8%); Finally, in last place came **others (all of the above)** with 24 responses (0.5%) of the total of the respondents' responses, and Figures 15-A and 15-B illustrate the distribution of the responses of the respondents to the question at hand.

Figure 15-A illustrates percentage distribution of the election manifestos which respondents most like to see candidates deliver on

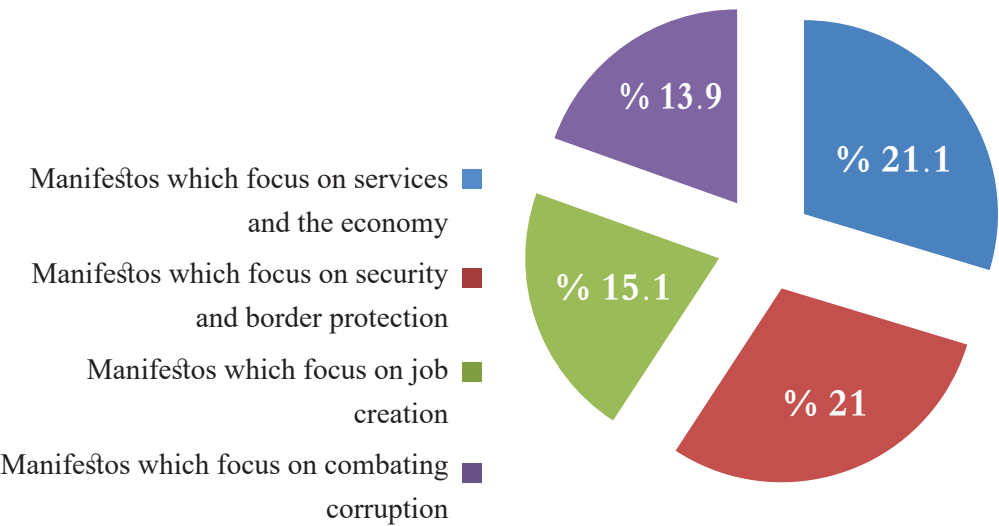
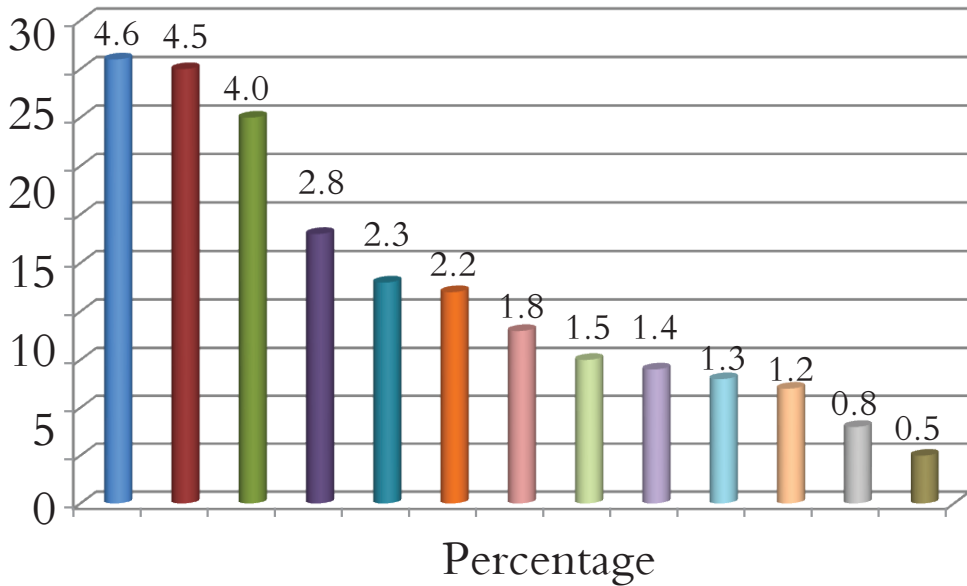


Figure 15-B illustrates the remaining election manifesto choices which respondents most like to see candidates deliver on



■ Focusing on Reconstruction of areas liberated from Daesh
 ■ Focusing on Education and health
 ■ Focusing on Eliminating sectarianism
 ■ Focusing on Freedom and individual rights
 ■ Focusing on Community reconciliation
 ■ Focusing on Support of the armed forces
 ■ Focusing on Rights of minorities, women and children
 ■ Focusing on Resolving issues between the Federal and Kurdistan Regional Governments
 ■ Focusing on Resolving issues between the Federal Government and Sunni Majority Governorates
 ■ Focusing on Foreign relations; maintaining balanced relations with neighbouring countries and the world at large
 ■ Focusing on Devolving greater powers to the Governorates
 ■ Focusing on Sport and Youth
 ■ Others (all of the above)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

From the questions, responses and the results, the findings of the poll may be summarised as follows:

1. The level of interest shown by the respondents towards the survey variables was synergistic, which is reflected in their order of importance.

2. The results of the poll showed clear variations in the responses of the respondents from the eighteen Governorates of Iraq, such that, in the majority of cases, there was clear correlation between the sample percentage and the actual total size of the population of the respective Governorate. The Governorate of **Baghdad** topped list of polled respondents with 26.5% of the total sample units. It was followed by **Nineveh** with 8.4%, and then by third placed **Basrah** with 7%, and so on and so forth for the remaining Governorates represented in the sample. Different percentages were obtained for each governorate largely due to the topographical impact on population densities and because of other environmental and human factors.

3. The age distribution of the respondents in the current study was divided into eight age groups, starting with the age group 18-24 and ending with the 66- and over age group. The ascending cumulative frequency for respondents in the 18-45 age range is represented by to a cumulative percentage of nearly 81% of the total sample units , that is to say, the majority of respondents may be categorised as “Youth” . It is also to say that this group represents the preferred age-class for the labour market; for marriage; and for their desire to embark on life’s varied activities and challenges. Perhaps more importantly, the role they play in bringing about social change and in influencing society, whether it

be through political participation or by voicing their criticism, opposition and shaping public opinion.

In the same context, the ascending cumulative frequency for respondents in the 46 - 66-and-above age group corresponds with a cumulative percentage approaching 19% of the total sample units, that is the respondents who belong to the middle-age and old-age groups, were clearly represented in the sample by nearly one-fifth of the sample population.

We also note from the cumulative age-group frequency that the sample distribution came very close to the normal distribution; in addition, the percentages and numbers of the target age groups in the poll were closely balanced. The youth category represented the majority of sample units.

4. The gender distribution of the sample under study varied at both the individual governorate level, as well as at collective governorate level. The percentage of male representation was approximately 64% of the total sample units, whereas females were represented by 36%.

On comparing the proportion of males to females in the sample population, it is clear that the percentage of males is much higher than females by a margin close to two thirds to one third, even though the sample population was selected from random numbers pulled from the database of mobile phone subscribers for all the Governorates of Iraq. Calls and interviews were conducted on this basis, resulting in the female representation we have witnessed. There is little doubt that social barriers and the reluctance of some women to have contact with and be interviewed by a “stranger or foreigner”, were highly significant contributory factors in the bias we see towards a higher number of male respondents; as

well as the fact that the sample was randomised and not weighted. With such obstacles standing in the way of achieving balanced interviews between males and females, it was indeed very satisfactory that 834 females (out of a sample population of 2,310) responded to express their opinions and attitudes for this poll.

5. The results of the poll revealed that the representation of marital status in the sample units differed equally at the individual governorate level as it did at the level of all the governorates. The percentage of married persons of the total sample units reached almost 78%, while the percentage of those unmarried amounted to 21%. The percentage of those widowed represented almost 1% of the total sample units; while the representation of divorced persons was only 0.4% of the total sample.

Marriage and family ties engender in people a greater sense of care and responsibility, the need to plan for the future and an interest in public affairs. This is largely due to the fact that a family comprising several members is more likely to have a combination of varied interests, a wider network of relatives and social contacts; as well as diverse characteristics, hopes and ambitions. Thus, being married or having experienced marriage will fuel greater curiosity and a multiplicity of opinions and decisions which, more often than not, be garnered for the benefit of society at large and less for individual gain.

Based on the foregoing, it is clear that marital status, in its four manifestations (married, single, widowed, divorced), came closest to a balanced distribution, out of the total sample population, when compared to the real population. Marital status also had the best proximity in percentages between the sample units for the majority of the Governorates.

6. The results of the questionnaire showed a marked variation in the educational level of the sample units. The percentage of illiterates was about 3% of the sample units. The percentage of those who read or write and obtained the primary certificate is about 24%; whilst the percentage of those who obtained intermediate and secondary school certificates amounted to nearly 38%. The percentage of those who obtained a diploma or bachelor's degree was about 29% of the total sample units; whereas the percentage of those who obtained a higher certificate (higher diploma, master's or doctorate) was about 6% of the total sample units.

In the same context, the cumulative percentage of primary and lower certificate holders was about 9% of the total sample units. The cumulative percentage of the intermediate and lower certificate holders was less than 46% of the total number of respondents. On the other hand, the cumulative percentage of the holders of secondary school and above certificates was 54% of the total number of respondents, indicating that most of the sample units have attained a good to a very good educational level.

The distribution of the sample units in respect of educational attainment in the various categories of respondent referred to above covered a range of percentages, starting from a low point and gradually increasing to reach the peak percentage value represented by the institute / bachelor category; and then changes direction at the higher diploma / master's / doctorate and carries on downwards. The results form a bell-shaped curve, indicative of a normal distribution of the sample population; thus corresponding very closely to the actual population under study.

7. The results of the survey revealed that the proportion of those who

described their monthly income **as often insufficient to meet their basic needs** (i.e. a low standard of living) reached about 36% of the total sample units. Those who described their monthly income **as having enough to manage family finances but far from perfect** (i.e. average standard of living) formed 50% of the sample units; whereas only 14% described their circumstances as **their income and property allowed them to live in prosperity** (i.e. affluent standard of living).

The results reveal that the majority of respondents enjoy an average to affluent standard of living with a cumulative percentage of 64% of the total sample units. The standard of living is, more often than not, associated with other variables such as educational attainment, nature of occupation, number of household members, income level and other variables. An analysis of educational attainment and the extent of its relationship to the standard of living of the sample units in the poll, shows us clearly that approximately 54% of all sample units have attained an educational level ranging from good to very good.

We can also surmise from the foregoing that a relationship exists between educational attainment and living standards on the one hand; which themselves co-exist with greater opportunities for participation in public life, on the other. There is little doubt that educational attainment and long term, stable satisfactory employment contribute, in one way or another, to the ability to partake in aesthetic activities such café society and to participate in cultural forums and civil society. The same factors stimulate a greater desire for political participation, as well as access to universities and academic institutions, and in making and influencing public opinion and much else.

Disparities in living standards are common in all societies, which naturally follow on from the type of work, the level of education, income and the accumulated wealth of individuals or the family unit; as well as the level of support and the organisation and the management of the economic affairs of the family.

8. The ethnic distribution of the sample population under study varied across each individual governorate as well as collectively across all the governorates. The percentage of **Arab** representation in the sample was about 80% of the total number of respondents, while the **Kurds** represented about 13%. The **Turcoman** represented nearly 5% and the **Sabians** a little more than 1%, of the total. The percentage of **Yazidis** was approximately 1%, and finally the percentage of the **Chaldean/Assyrians** was 0.1% of the total sample units.

In spite of the prevalence of the Yazidi as a religion and their ethnic affiliation to the Kurds, 26 respondents insisted on being described as a stand-alone ethnic group. We acquiesced to their demands in order to preserve the scientific integrity of the current study, as well as having regard to sociological theories and studies into identity which confirm that identity definition is a conscious personal choice, whilst also noting that identity takes the form of what the respondents impart when they describe their characteristics and the differences between them and others and reassert these factors. Hence, the number and percentage of Yazidis was cited as an ethnic identity for those respondents who insisted on defining their ethnicity in this fashion.

The results of the poll also revealed an unintended uniformity in the distribution of the sample at the ethnic level; all the ethnic groups were represented in the survey sample, thus providing a satisfactory opportunity for

the different groups to express their views and attitudes towards the upcoming elections. Accordingly, we would encourage reliance on the sample data and the results of the poll for being closely representative of the society under study.

9. The results of the poll also highlighted the fact that 54% of the total sample units responded positively to the question about whether or not they had updated their data on the voter register; while 46% said they had not.

10. The poll revealed that 42% of the total sample, expressed optimism about the importance of the upcoming elections as a means of improving the situation in the country. At the same time 29% expressed uncertainty about the benefits of the forthcoming elections; while 29% were pessimistic and stated that the upcoming elections will have no positive impact on the country's development.

Young people were more optimistic in their response regarding the importance of the upcoming elections, and role they will play, than their middle aged and older compatriots. Altogether, 790 youths in the cumulative age group 18-45 (equating to roughly 34% of the total sample) votes "Yes", representing 81% of the 970 respondents who together polled "Yes."

11. The results of the poll revealed the intentions of the respondents and the nature of their decisions regarding participation in the upcoming elections. Some 59% of the sample units indicated they would participate in the next elections; whilst 25% were undecided (maybe yes; maybe no); and nearly 16% have decided not to participate in the upcoming elections.

12. The results of the poll revealed the emergence of an inconspicuous (and unintended) pattern **regarding respondents' attitudes towards the parties**

and figures they intend to vote for in the upcoming elections. It was found that just over 24% of all sample units will vote for **civil or secular** parties or figures. In second place, came the option to vote for **independent technocrats**, with marginally fewer respondents than the first option, but again at 24%. There followed the option of voting for any party or figure that enjoys the support of **the religious authority**, which received approximately 15% of responses. Next came the fourth option to vote for **a bloc or coalition or a party comprising all Iraqi factions** which received 12% of responses.

The proportion of responses for parties or figures with **religious or sectarian** affiliations was 5% of the total; whilst those who would consider voting for those affiliated to tribal **or clan** amounted to 3% and to **ethnic or nationalist** 2%. Those who were collectively grouped in the **other** category amounted to 15% of the total sample units, distributed as follows: 8 % said that they had not yet decided to vote for any party or figure; while about 4% said they would vote for those who **serve the people and the country**. About 2% of the total sample units, insisted that they will not vote at the next elections under any circumstances.

13. The attitudes of respondents varied greatly, depending on governorate, regarding their intention to vote for **current political incumbents at the next election**, with about 11% stating that would for vote them in the upcoming elections; with 34% being uncertain; and 55% of the total sample units confirmed they would definitely not re-elect them.

14. The results of the poll also revealed the intentions of the respondents and their preferences for the **form of candidacy or type of nominee** they intend to vote for (**party, bloc, coalition or independents**). It emerged that

approximately 69% of the sample units would prefer voting for **independent candidates**; whilst some 13% said they would prefer to vote for **a bloc or a coalition**; and about 8% prefer to vote in favour of a party. Finally, about 10% of the sample units indicated that they had **not yet decided** on any of the above-mentioned forms of candidacy.

15. The results of the poll revealed the hierarchy of the most important personal characteristics or traits preferred by the respondents in the candidates whom they intend to vote for. **Five traits** accounted for the majority of the respondents' preferences, with a cumulative percentage of 90% of total responses. In top place came **integrity and honesty** with 30.5%; in second place was **higher degree (represented by academic achievement and specialism)** with nearly 17%; in third place came **independence and non-affiliation to party or bloc** with almost 16%; followed by, in fourth place, **professional competence and work experience** with 16%, and in fifth place came **services made by candidate to the local community** with almost 11%.

16. The results of the poll also revealed the order of importance of the most prominent **electoral reforms** sought by the respondents and which they demand from the candidates to deliver on. **Four reforms** take prominence with a cumulative percentage of 78% of all responses. Ranked top was the choice **replacing the independent electoral commission with one appointed by the united nations** with 26%. It was followed, in second place, by **lists to be open and not closed** with 21%. In third place was **retain the Iraqi identity of the independent electoral commission but replace its members with independent ones** with 17%. Ranked fourth was the choice to **amend election laws to allow individuals and minor blocs to win seats** with 14%.

Ranked fifth in importance in the list of reform priorities, from the view point of the respondents, is to **replace governorates with provinces as the electoral constituency** with 8% of the total responses; followed in sixth place by **reduce number of seats on the governorate council** also with 8%. Finally, the “**other**” option came with 287 responses or 6%.

17. The results of the survey also revealed the hierarchy of the most important **electoral manifesto pledges** demanded by the respondents for adoption by the candidates. **Four prominent manifesto pledges** secured the majority of the respondents’ preferences with a cumulative percentage of almost 71% of the total responses. Ranked top was the **services and economy** manifesto pledge, with 21.1%; followed by the **security and border protection** manifesto pledge, with 21%; in third place came the **job creation** pledge with 15%; followed by the **anti-corruption** pledge with 14% of the total responses.

Recommendations:

1. According to the above figures and percentages, and following an analysis of the results, it is evident that the opinions and attitudes of the youth towards the upcoming elections, in terms of engendering confidence, creating hope, and facilitating their participation in the voting process; should form one of the top priorities of the executive, in particular; and all the other political factions and elites in general. The persisting uncertainty and pessimistic mood of the public cannot be in the interests of the democratic process or its maturity and development; nor can it be in the interests of the country’s growth and prosperity. Thus, it behoves those in power to put into action programmes and

agendas specifically designed to motivate the youth and to meet their needs.

2. The results of the poll have also revealed what might be called a **“struggle between survival and change.”** In the opinion of the respondents and according to the tenor of their responses, the upcoming Iraqi elections appear to represent **“the majority seeking change through independent figures”**; whereas parties and blocs search for a supportive public to guarantee their survival in power. The objective (**change through independent figures**) would appear to be unattainable, especially if the various parties and blocs seek to expand their power base through **every** politician already in power. Hence, the parties and blocs should focus on attracting only those who have not already been “consumed” or “over exposed” by the media; and seek to introduce new faces to the political landscape whose character traits conform to the criteria and views expressed by the respondents in the poll, such as “technocrats, professionals, specialists, people of integrity, put the interests of the country first..... etc.)

3. There is a real fear that participation in the next elections will be weak, as the results of the poll have revealed that about 46% of respondents have failed to update their details on the voter register. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Independent Electoral Commission to review and reinstate the voter register updating process by re-opening centres to receive citizens in all the governorates, in addition to expanding the number of portals and activating the programme for mobile teams.

4. Electoral reform is a permanent feature of any healthy democratic system. In order to conceive a popular electoral system, it is advisable to start by drawing up a list of criteria that summarise what is to be achieved and what to be

avoided, based on what has been expressed in the public opinion poll. Leading the list of reforms are **replacing the independent electoral commission with one appointed by the united nations; lists to be open and not closed; retain the Iraqi identity of the independent electoral commission but replace its members with independent ones; amend election laws to allow individuals and minor blocs to win seats; replace governorates with provinces as the electoral constituency; reduce number of seats on the governorate council.**

5. The respondents showed a marked tendency to vote for independents, expressed by 69% of the total sample units. This tendency exposes the lack of trust shown by the public towards the traditional parties and blocs, on the one hand; and the lack of social awareness of the importance of organized collective action, on the other. The lack of confidence is probably due to a number of factors, including the long-term and historical repression of parties, organizations, associations and trade unions practised by the former regime; which served to highlight the futility of their work during that era. It is probably also due to the odious experiences of the public in relation to the participation by the various parties and blocs who came to power post 2003. The situation demands that all political elites (parties, blocs and leaderships) take the issue seriously and instigate awareness programmes that contribute to restoring public confidence in the electoral process. At the forefront of these initiatives, will be workshops and seminars attended by a diverse audience of independently minded citizens and other entities, where political parties demonstrate their role in the democratic system.